

CHARACTER

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NO Wonder if I am at a Loss to describe him, whom *Nature* was as much puzzled to make. 'Tis here as in *Painting*, where the most mis-shapen Figures are the greatest Proofs of Skill. To draw a *Thersites* or *Aesop* well, requires the Pencil of *Vandike* or *Titian*, more than the best Features and Lineaments. All the Thoughts I can frame of him are as rude and indigested as himself. The very Idea and Conception of him are enough to cramp *Grammar*, to disturb *Sence* and confound *Syntax*: He's a *Solecism* in the great *Construction*, therefore the best Description of him is *Nonsense*, and the fittest Character to write it in, that *Post-hook-hand* the Devil us'd at *Oxford* in *Queens College-Library*. He were *Topick* enough for convincing an *Atheist* that the World was made by *Chance*. The first Matter had more of *Form* and *Order*, the *Chaos* more of *Symmetry* and *Proportion*. I could call him *Nature's By-blow*, *Miscarriage* and *Abortive*, or say, he is her *Embryo* sink'd before *Maturity*; but that is *stale* and *flat*, and I must fly a higher Pitch to reach his *Deformity*. He is the ugliest she ever took Pains to make so, and *Age* to make worse. All the Monsters of *Africa* lie kennell'd in his single Skin. He's one of the *Gratesques* of the Universe, whom the grand Artist drew only (as *Painters* do uncouth ugly Shapes) to fill up the empty Spaces and Cantons of this great Frame: He's Man anagrammatiz'd: A *Mandrake* has more of *Humane* Shape; His Face carries *Libel* and *Lampoon* in't. *Nature* at its Composition wrote *Burlesque*, and shew'd him how far she could out do *Art* in *Grimace*. I wonder 'tis not hir'd by the *Play-Houses* to draw *Antick* *Vizards* by. Without doubt he was made to be laugh'd at, and design'd for the *Scaramuchio* of Mankind. When I see him, I can no more forbear than at sight of a *Zany* or *Nokes*; but am like to run the *Risque* of the *Philosopher*, looking on an *Ass* mumbling *Thistles*. He's more ill-favour'd than the Picture of *Winter* drawn by a Fellow that daubs *Sign-Posts* more lowering than the last Day of *January*. I have seen a handsome Mortal carv'd in monumental *Ginger-bread*, and woven in Hangings at *Mortlock*. If you have ever view'd that wooden Gentleman that peeps out of a Country Barber's Window, you may fancy some Resemblance of him: His damn'd squeezing Close-stool Face can be liken'd to nothing better than the Buttocks of an old wrinkled *Baboon*, straining upon an *Hillock*. The very Sight of him in a Morning would work with one beyond *Jallap* and *Rhubarb*. A Doctor (I'm told) once prescrib'd him to one of his Parishioners for a *Purge*: he wrought the Effect, and gave the Patient fourteen Stools. 'Tis pity he is not drawn at the City Charges, and hung up in some Publick *Forica* as a Remedy against *Costiveness*.

Indeed by his Hue you might think he had been employed to that use: One would take him for the Picture of *Scoggin* or *Tarleton* on a *Privy-house* Door, which by long standing there has contracted the Color of the neighbouring Excrements. Reading lately how *Garagantua* came into the World at his Mother's Ear, it put an unlucky Thought into my Head con-

cerning him: I presently fancied that he was voided, not brought forth; that his Dam was deliver'd of him on t'other Side, beslit him coming out, and he has ever since retain'd the Stains. His filthy Countenance looks like an old Chimney-piece in a decay'd Inn, fullied with *Smoak*, and the sprinkling of *Ale-pots*. 'Tis dirtier than an ancient thumb'd Record, greater than a *Chandler's Shop-book*, you'd imagine *Snails* had crawl'd the Hay upon't. The Case of it is perfect *Velum*, and has often been mistaken for it: A *Scrivener* was like to cheapen it for making *Indentures* and *Deeds*: Besides, 'tis as wrinkled as a walking *Buskin*: It has more *Furrows* than all *Cotswold*. You may resemble it to a *Gammon* of *Bacon* with the *Sword* off. I believe the Devil travels over it in his Sleep with *Hob-nails* in his Shoes. By the *Maggot-eaten* *Sut-face* you'd swear he had been dug out of his Grave again with all his *Worms* about him to bait *Eel-hooks*. But enough of it in General, I think it Time to descend to Particulars; I wish I could divide his Face, as he does his Text, *i. e.* tear it asunder: 'Tis fit I begin with the most remarkable part of it. His Mouth (saving your presence Christian Readers) is like the Devil's Arse of *Peak*, and is just as large. By the Scent you'd take it for the Hole of a *Privy*: He may be winded by a good Nose at twelve Score: I durst have ventur'd at first being in Company that he dieted on *Asa-fetida*. His very Discourse stinks in a literal Sense; 'tis breaking Wind, and you'd think he talk'd at the other End. Last New-years-day he tainted a Loin of *Veal* with saying Grace: All the Guests were fain to use the Fanatical Posture in their own Defence, and stand with their Caps over their Eyes like *Malefactors* going to be turn'd off. That too that renders it the more unsupportable is, that it can't be stopp'd: The Breach is too big ever to be clos'd. Were he a *Milliner*, he might measure Ribbon by it without the help of his Yard or Counter. It reaches so far backwards, those that have seen him with his *Perruque* off, say it may be discerned behind. When he gapes 't would stretch the Dutchess of *Cl*—to straddle over: I had almost said 'tis as wide as from *Dover* to *Calais*. Could he shut it, the Wrinkles round about would represent the Form of the Sea-mens Compass, and should he bluster, 'twere a pretty Emblem of those swelling Mouths at the Corners of Maps puffing out Storms. When he *Smoaks*, I am always thinking of *Mongibel* and its Eruptions. His Head looks exactly like a Devise on a Kitchen Chimney: His Mouth the Vent and his Nose the Fane. And now I talk of his Snout, I dare not mention the *Elephants* for fear of speaking too little: I'd make bold with the old Wit, and compare it to the Gnomon of a Dial; but that he has not Teeth enough to stand for the twelve Hours. 'Tis so long that when he rides a Journey, he makes use of it to open Gates. He's fain to snite it with both his Hands. It cannot be wip'd under as much as the Royal Breech. A Man of ordinary Bulk might find Shelter under its Eves, were it not for the Dropings. One protested to me in *Raillery*; that when he looks against the Sun it shadows his whole Body, as some Story of the *Scipodes* Feet. Another Hyperbolic *Rascal* would make me believe that the Arches

of it are as large as any two of London-Bridge, or the great Rialto at Venice. Not long ago I met a one Leg'd Tarpawlin that had been begging at his Door, but could get nothing: The witty Whoreson (I remember) swore that his Bow-Sprit was as long as that of the Royal Sovereign. I confess, flood he in my way, I durst not venture round by his Fore-side, for fear of going half a Mile about. 'Tis perfectly doubling the Cape: He has this Privilege for being unmannerly that it will not suffer him to put off his Hat; and therefore ('tis said) at home he has a Cord fasten'd to it, and draws it off with a Pulley, and so receives the Addressee of those that visit him. This I'm very confident, he has not heard himself sneeze these seven Years: And that leads me to his Tools of Hearing: His Ears resemble those of a Country Justice Black Jack, and are of the same matter hue and size: He's as well hung as any Hound in the Country; but by their Bulk and growing upward, he deserves to be rank'd with the graver Beasts: His single self might have shewn with *Smeeke*, and all the Club Divines. You may pare enough from the Sides of his Head to have furnish'd a whole Regiment of Round Heads: He wears more there than all the Pillories in England ever have done. *Mandeville* tells us of a People somewhere, that use their Ears for Cushions: He has reduced the Legend into Probability: A Servant of his (that could not conceal the *Midas*) told me lately in private, that going to Bed he binds them on his Crown, and they serve him instead of Quilt Night-Caps. The next observable that falls under my Consideration is his Back: Nor need I go far out of my way to meet it, for it peeps over his Shoulders: He was built with a Buttress to support the Weight of his Nose; and help ballance it. Nature hung on him a Knapsack, and made him represent both Tinker and Budget too. He looks like the visible Eye of *Aeneas* bolstering up his Father, or like a Beggar-Woman, endorht with her whole Litter, and with Child behind. You may take him for *Anti-Christopher* with the Devil at his Back. I believe the *Atlas* in *Wadham-Garden* at Oxford was carv'd by him: Certainly he was begot in a Cupping-Glass: His Mother longed for Pumpions, or went to see some Camel shewn while she was conceiving him. One would think a Mole has crept into his Carcase before 'tis laid in the Church-Yard, and rooted in it, or that an Earthquake had disorder'd the Symmetry of the Microcosm, sunk one Mountain and put up another. And now I should descend lower, if I durst venture: But I'll not defile my Pen: My Ink is too cleanly for a farther Description. I must beg my Reader's Distance; as if I were going to untruss. Should I mention what is beneath, the very Jakes would suffer by the Comparison, and 'twere enough to bring a Bog-house in Disgrace. Indeed he ought to have been drawn like the good People on the Parliament-House, only from the Shoulders upwards. To me 'tis a greater Prodigy than himself, how his Soul has so long endur'd so nasty a Lodging. Were there such a thing as a Metempsychosis, how gladly would it exchange its Carcase for that of the worst and vilest Brute: I'm sufficiently persuaded against the Whim of *Præexistance*; for any thing that had the pretence of Reason would never have entered such a Durance of Choice: Doubtless it must have been guilty of some unheard of Sin, for which Heaven dooms it Penance in the present Body, and ordains it its first Hell here. And 'tis disputable which may prove the worst, for't has suffer'd half an Eternity already. Men can hardly tell which of the two will out-live the other. By his Face you'd guess him one of the *Patriarchs*, and that he liv'd before the Flood: His Head looks as if't had worn out three or four Bodies, and were Legacied to him by his Great-Grand-Father. His Age is out of Knowledge, I believe he was born before Registers were invented. He should have been a Ghost in *Queen Mary's* Days. I wonder *Holingshead* does not speak of him. Every Limb about him is Chronicle: *Par* and *John* of the Times were short-Livers to him: They say, he can remember when *Pauls* was Founded, and *London-Bridge* built. I myself have heard him tell all the Stories of *York* and *Lancaster* upon his own

Knowledge. His very Cane and Spectacles are enough to set up an *Aquary*. The first was the Walking-staff of *Laufance* Arch-bishop of *Canterbury* which is to be seen by his Arms upon the Head of it: The other belong'd to the Chaplain of *William* the Conqueror; was of Norman make, and travell'd over with him. 'Tis strange the late Author of *M. Fickle* forgot to make his Sir *Arthur Oldlowe* swear by them, the Oath had been of as good Antiquity as St. *Austin's* Night-Cap, or *Mahomet's* Threshold. I have often wonder'd he never set up for a Conjuror: His very Look would bring him in *Vogue*, draw Custom, and undo *Lilly* and *Gadbury*. You'd take him for the Ghost of Old *Haly* or *Abumazar*, or the Spirit Frier in the Fortune Book. his Head for the enchanted brazen one of Frier *Bacon*. 'Twould pose a good Physiognomist to give Names to the Lines in his Face, I've observ'd all the Figures and Diagrams in *Agrippa* and *Ptolmy's Centiloquies* there upon strict view. And t'other Day a Linguist of my Acquaintance shew'd me all the *Arabic* Alphabet betwixt his Brow and Chin. Some have admir'd how he came to be admitted into Orders, since his very Face is against the Canon: I guess he pleaded the Qualification of the Prophets of Old, to be withered, Toothless and deformed. He can pretend to be an *Elisha* only by his Baldness. The Devil's Oracles heretofore were utter'd from such a Mouth. 'Twas then the Candidates for the Tripus were fain to plead Wrinkles and Gray-Hairs: A Splay Mouth, and a goggle Eye were the cheapest Simony, and the ugly and crippled were the only Men of Preferment. And this leads me to consider him a little in the Pulpit. And there 'tis hard to distinguish whether that or his Skin be the coarser Waincoat: He represents a Crackt Weather-Glass in a Frame. You'd take him by his Looks and Posture for *Muggleton* doing Penance and paulted with rotten Eggs. Had his Hearers the Trick of Writing short-Hand, I should fancy him an Offender upon a Scaffold, and then penning his Confession. Not a fluxt Debauch in a Sweating-Tub makes worse Faces. He makes Doctrine as Folks do their Water in the Stone or Strangury. *Balaam's* Ass was a better Divine, and had a better Delivery. The Thorn at *Glastenbury* had more Sense and Religion, and would make more Converts. He speaks not, but grunts, like one of the *Gadaren* Hogs after the Devils enter'd. When I came first to his Church, and saw him perch'd on high against a Pillar, I took him by his gaping for some Juggler going to swallow Bibles and Hour-Glasses: But I was soon convinc'd that other Feats were to be play'd, and on a sudden lost all my Senses in Noise: A Drunken Huntsman reeling in while he was at Prayer, ask'd if he were giving his Parishioners a Hollow: He had preached half his Parish deaf: His Din is beyond the *Catadups* of *Nile*: All his Patron's Pigeons, are frighted from their Apartment, and he's generally believed the Occasion. He may be heard farther than *Sin Samuël Moorland's* Flagelet. Nay one damn'd mad Rogue swore: Should he take a Text concerning the Resurrection, he might serve for the last Trumpet. And yet in one Respect he's fitted for the Function. His Countenance, if not Doctrine, can scare Men into Repentance, like an Apparition: Should he walk after he's Dead, he would not be more dreadful, then now while he is alive.

A Maid meeting him in the Dark in a Church-Yard, was frighted into Phanaticism. Another is in *Bullam* upon the same Occasion: I dare not approach him without an Exorcism. In the Name, &c. is the fittest Salutation: Some have thought the Parsonage House haunted since he dwelt there. In *York-shire* ('tis reported) they make use of his Name instead of *Raw*, *Head* and *Bloody-Bones* to fright Children: He is more terrible then those *Phantoms* Country Folks tell of by the Fire Side, and pretend to have seen, with Leathern-wings, Cloven-Feet and Sawcer-Eyes: If he go to Hell (as 'tis almost an Article of my Creed, he will) the Devils will quake for all their warm Dwelling and crowd up into a Nook for Fear of him.